

**UTAH School Improvement Fund State Application
Section 1003(g) Fiscal Year 2007**

\$576,478.00 State School Improvement Fund

Abstract. Currently, Utah has 10 schools identified for improvement; four schools identified for corrective action; and one school identified for restructuring. Utah proposes to use the supplemental school improvement funds to build on its current system of school support that utilizes an appraisal and school support team to make systemwide improvements. The new funds would provide additional in-depth support for instructional change using three research-based strategies—instructional audits, onsite coaching, and leadership institutes. The instructional audits will consist of an appraisal to rate each school on a series of rubrics that determine fidelity to the Utah Core Curriculum; fidelity to the Utah standards for ELL instruction; and fidelity to a set of instructional practices with high effect sizes, i.e., known to impact student achievement. Feedback will be given both to the school as a whole and to individual teachers. Coaching will then be provided onsite for at least five days per month to individuals and groups with a focus on improving the scores on the audit. In addition, leadership institutes will be provided for principals and school improvement teams to assist them in becoming knowledgeable of high quality instructional practices, particularly with ELL and Special Education students and to show them how to lead this type of change. Utah would like to provide sufficient funding for change to occur and be sustained, so rather than spreading these funds to all eligible schools, only five will be funded through a competitive process and these five will be given approximately \$109,000 to pay for the audits, coaches, and participation in the institutes. The process will be developed by USOE staff from Title I, Curriculum and Instruction, ELL, and Special Ed with the assistance of the SWCC and, if successful, will be scaled up in the future for all schools identified for improvement.

PART A

1. Amount of Funds Retained for State-level Activities
 - a. Funds retained: \$28, 824
2. Description of Statewide System of Support and Description of How Funds Available to SEA under Section 1003(g) Will Be Used
 - a. Statewide System of Support - Description of Utah System of Support
The mission of the Utah State Office of Education Title I School Improvement Process is to help build capacity for schools and districts to improve student achievement. The Title IA section of No Child Left Behind requires the state educational agency to assist schools and districts in analyzing

and improving student achievement. Support for the appraisal process and the training of school support teams are services of the USOE that fulfill this aspect of the law.

Needs— Utah has 10 schools identified for improvement; four schools identified for corrective action; and one school identified for restructuring. Seventy-six percent of the students in the schools identified as in need of improvement are ELL Students and 32% are receiving special education. Fifty-four percent of the schools identified did not make AYP in Language Arts and 62% did not make AYP in Mathematics. Sixty percent of ELL students did not make AYP in Language Arts and 69% of the ELL students did not make AYP in Mathematics.

Purpose – The School Improvement Appraisal Process uses best practices and research-based rubrics to highlight strengths and weaknesses in a school that leads the school to adopt practices that are more effective. The training of School Support Teams ensures quality delivery of services by highly qualified practitioners using research-based practices.

1. The goals of the appraisal and school support trainings are (a) to provide credible and knowledgeable support, (b) to build capacity for sustainable student achievement, and (c) to build supportive partnerships with all stakeholders.
2. The system is a clear and fair process that ensures compliance, which is rigorous and comprehensive, and practical, relevant, and efficient.
3. The appraisal system focuses on seven key components of school success: Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Professional Development, Leadership, Parent/Community Involvement, and School Culture/Climate.

Process – Currently, schools identified for improvement appoint a leadership team, hire a school support team to conduct an appraisal of seven key areas—curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, professional development, leadership, parent involvement, and school culture and climate. Utah's system of support for schools in improvement (the system) has been in effect since summer 2007. The

system has been widely embraced throughout the state. With additional funds, however, the Utah State Office of Education would be able to provide more in-depth improvement support using research-based processes with a strong record of success.

- b. Use of Available Funds – Three strategies—instructional audits, coaches, and leadership institutes—are among those that show significant promise in assisting the neediest Title I schools, which have already conducted an appraisal of their schools, to look more deeply at instructional classroom practice within the classrooms.

In the state of Utah, Limited English Proficient students and Students with Disabilities are consistently the subpopulations that have the lowest number of students reaching proficiency on end-of-year Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT's). The vision of the Utah State Office of Education is to more fully utilize the expertise within the agency and assure that there is internal collaboration within and among all departments that are responsible for ensuring that all students have the best possible educational experience (including, but are not limited to, curriculum especially in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics, Special Education, Title III, Title VII, New Teacher Licensure, Title I, and Assessment).

The means to accomplish the goal of further assisting the state's neediest schools is to fully utilize the Utah State Office of Education English Language Learners (ELL) standards and master plan to dynamically implement ELL strategies.

In partnership with USOE specialists from the other departments, a simultaneous, three-pronged approach to support the neediest schools includes: (a) instructional audits conducted by trained specialists with audit tools for eventual statewide accessibility to give specific feedback regarding classroom practice and to ensure the Utah State Core Curriculum is enacted with faithfulness and fidelity; (b) coaching within targeted schools for a short-term infusion of customized instructional assistance for one year; and (c) targeted leadership academies designed for principals and leadership teams of the targeted schools,

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based on school data and results of the school improvement appraisal.

Title I Director Karl Wilson, Associate Superintendent Brenda Hales, and the Title I School and District Improvement team conducted the initial inquiry into the possibilities of utilizing the \$576,478.00 School Improvement allocation in the most strategic and effective manner to impact student achievement, close the achievement gap, and reduce the number of schools in improvement status. The Utah State Office of Education would retain five percent or \$28,824.00 to be used for training, evaluation of the progress made by the schools in the use of the additional funds, printing, and support of the meetings held. The matrix for the ongoing development of the strategies for providing support to the target schools according to the mandates of the 2007 School Improvement Fund to is found in Table A.

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Table A. Utah State Office of Education Fund Use: Strategies Development Process

Strategy	Description	Development Process*	Resources	Benefits
Instructional Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Audit Math/Reading/Language Arts with ELL and Special Education overlays, grounded in UT's ELL standard and master plan • Network of SEA Title I, Curriculum, Special Education Specialists • USOE will train • Schools audit one another like Monitoring Teams-peer approach • SWCC or hire consultant and/or evaluator to guide USOE in the process • Tools will be accessible to all in state, but required to receive grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get input from Title I Director and Assoc. Supt. • Create a brief describing strategy • Form USOE &/or district cross-functional team • Develop proposal • Delineate strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Training • Empowerment Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ELL strategies in neediest schools • Build school, district, and state capacity for closing the achievement gap & increasing student achievement • Promote cross-functional collaboration within USOE • Maximized USOE resources
Coaches working within a targeted school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEA PD for, schools would hire, short-term infusion for one year • Vertical and horizontal common issues uncovered and resolved • Develop a learning community among school leadership, faculty, and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get input from Title I Director and Assoc. Supt. • Create a brief describing strategy • Form USOE &/or district cross-functional team • Develop proposal • Delineate strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Training • Empowerment Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ELL strategies in neediest schools • Build school, district, and state capacity for closing the achievement gap & increasing student achievement • Promote cross-functional collaboration within USOE • Maximized USOE resources
Targeted In structural Leadership Institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL Poverty, Special Education, Reading/LA, Mathematics and other reasons for not making AYP • Regional or central • Leader learns something and applies in a school, then does case study • Shares via critical friend protocol • Engage in and/or expand extant academies to serve the needs of targeted schools; or, develop institutes that have the appropriate curriculum components with ELL and Special Education overlays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get input from Title I Director and Assoc. Supt. • Create a brief describing strategy • Form USOE &/or district cross-functional team • Develop proposal • Delineate strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Training • Empowerment Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ELL strategies in neediest schools • Build school, district, and state capacity for closing the achievement gap & increasing student achievement • Promote cross-functional collaboration within USOE • Maximized USOE resources
*Utah State Office of Education School Improvement Team has begun this process; meetings with cross-function teams are ongoing				

3. Description of SEA School Improvement Strategy or Strategies and Rationale for Selection of Improvement Strategy or Strategies

a. Description

- i. An instructional audit will be performed to determine the extent to which teachers are implementing research-based practices specifically in reading/language arts and/or mathematics that are aligned with the Utah Core Curriculum. As appropriate, the audit is also used to determine fidelity to the Utah ELL standards and best practices; ways in which teachers differentiate instruction; use of formative assessments; types of feedback given to students; instructional style; and use of instructional materials. The audit is based on structured classroom observations, examination of lesson plans, and follow-up interviews with teachers shortly after the observation has occurred.
- ii. Coaching will be provided to grade level teams, vertical teams, and individual teachers (and the principal as needed), serving to address the challenges that surfaced in the instructional audits. Focus will be on improving reading/language arts and/or mathematics for the populations for which the school was identified for improvement, with special emphasis on ELL and Special Education strategies. The schools may use whatever coaching model they would like, but coaches will be expected to facilitate instructional conversations, model/demonstrate effective instructional practices, observe instruction and offer specific individual and group feedback, monitor for implementation of the feedback, and provide job aides as needed.
- iii. Leadership institutes for principals and for their improvement teams will focus specifically on helping leaders to implement strategies associated with closing the achievement gap and improving achievement for all students in reading/language arts and mathematics, with an emphasis on ELL students and students identified for Special Education services. The institutes will help leaders to set benchmarks for accountability, understand appropriate sequencing and levers for change given their specific situations, how to facilitate and interpret the audits, establish detailed, motivating plans for addressing challenges revealed in the audits, how to monitor for success, and how to establish and lead learning communities.

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- b. Rationale—Review of Utah’s Federal AYP Summary Report reveals the student groups in most need of additional support are students limited English proficient [English Language Learners (ELL)] and students with disabilities. See Table B. The Utah State Office of Education is authorizing allocation of time for Title I, ELL, and Special Education Specialists to delineate, manage, and revise the three strategies— instructional audits, coaches, and leadership institutes—for the selected schools. Instructional audits provide data identifying gaps in content alignment with Utah Core Curriculum, sequence, pacing, instructional delivery, and “time and viability” (Marzano, 2003, pp. 24-25) that impacts what and how the student is learning . Coaching, as described by Joyce, Weil & Calhoun (2000), has three major functions leading to the ability of the teacher to make the right instructional decisions: “(1) Provision of professional companionship for reflection on practice; (2) Analysis of application, and (3) Adaptation to the students” (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 200, p. 441). Leadership institutes (a) prepare principals and their leadership teams for “transformational challenges” (Kotter, 1996, p. 18) and (b) offer the skills and strategies needed to co-create and communicate with the appropriate sense of urgency the change vision for guiding their respective schools through a turnaround (Senge 1990; Kotter, 1996). Access to these strategies will be through the School Improvement funds made available to schools in terms of grants to support the specific strategies uncovered in the instructional audits to assist in accomplishing Title I School Improvement Goals.

Table B. Utah’s Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Summary Report 2006-07 School Year

Categories	2007 Language Arts Grade Span: 3-8	2007 Language Arts Grade Span: 10-12	2007 Mathematics Grade Span: 3-8	2007 Mathematics Grade Span: 10-12
Whole State	81%	85%	78%	46%
Economically Disadvantaged	69%	72%	66%	38%
Limited English Proficient	56%	51%	54%	24%
Students with Disabilities	45%	40%	45%	26%

PART B

1. The Utah State Office of Education will notify all of the 11 Utah schools in improvement. Of the 11 schools, five schools will be selected and appropriated \$109,530 each.
 - a. SEA definition of *greatest need* and *strongest commitment*
 - i. Greatest Need—Notify all, select five
 1. Schools identified as in the Title I improvement process
 2. Schools identified as not achieving AYP in the ELL and Special Education
 3. Schools identified as having the lowest percent of the ELL and Special Education students achieving proficiency
 - ii. Commitment
 1. Schools that are willing to enter into an Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with approval and signature from the respective LEA to do the following—
 - a. Commit to participate in an instructional audit process
 - b. Commit resources to implement agreed upon strategies that include instructional coaches and an evaluation of the implementation
 - c. Commit to have the LEA, the principal and school leadership and support teams participate in leadership planning and training activities (Instructional Institutes)
 - b. SEA criteria for use of section 1003(g) funds to determine LEA grant award amounts to ensure that each grant
 - i. SEA criteria will be met with the appropriation designated for the three strategies.
 - ii. Each school will receive \$109,530.
 - c. Utah State Office of Education integrate of 1003(g) funds with other funds awarded by the SEA under ESEA in that the three strategies further support the neediest schools in overcoming learning issues identified in the Title I School Improvement Appraisal Process and supports the accomplishment of each school's goals in their Title I School Improvement plans, both under sections 1116 and 1117. The effectiveness of these strategies will be evaluated by an external evaluator.
 - d. Upon the receipt of additional funds from the Department of Education, the Utah State Office of Education will renew an LEA's grant for up to two additional one-year period if schools in the LEA are meeting the goals for improvement under section 1116.

2. SEA application requirements that LEAs ensure
 - a. The SEA ensures LEAs' use of funds on the designated strategies through the design delivery, through the MOU made with the five neediest schools will have the approval by way of the signature of the respective LEA superintendents, and by the inclusion and active support of the LEA Title I, Curriculum, and Special Education Directors and in doing so LEAs will use 1003(g)(a) funds to implement SEA designed school improvement strategies listed herein and that the strategy/strategies are based on data.
 - b. School improvement strategies supported with these funds contribute to achieving the annual measurable objectives in school improvement plans [1116(b)(3)(v)] or to achieving the goals necessary for schools to exit corrective action and restructuring status, as appropriate.
 - i. As schools provide more effective / intense services for ELL and Special Education students, we anticipate that ELL and Special Education students will achieve greater level of proficiency and the target schools will achieve AYP and close the achievement gap.

Part C

Monitoring-Each SEA must describe how it will monitor the effectiveness of the strategies selected and implemented with funds from section 1003(g) and 1003(a) and the steps the SEA will take if the school improvement strategies supported with these funds are not contributing to increased student achievement.

Utah School Improvement Fund Evaluation Plan

The Utah State Office of Education expects that percentages of students performing at the proficient level in targeted areas of reading/language arts and/or mathematics for ELL students and special education students will increase significantly. To accomplish Utah's goals for the School Improvement Fund strategies, an external evaluator will be retained for the purposes of conducting an developmental/empowerment (Fetterman) evaluation of the state's process and the impact of schools' implementation of the strategies on student achievement.

The evaluation process will produce both formative and summative results. The formative evaluation and results, which will be based on data and information gathered and analyzed according to agreed work plan will provide recommendations for periodic adjustment to the Utah School Improvement Fund strategies and implementation. The formative evaluation will examine fidelity to the Utah Core Curriculum and the quality of implementation. Summative evaluation and results will provide a comparative analysis of the data to determine the critical success factors for

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consistent quality and effectiveness of the strategies in terms of increasing student achievement and closing the student achievement gap in five of Utah's neediest schools selected for participation. Summative evaluation will explicated the extent to which the goals were met.

The success indicators, evaluation protocols, and evaluation tools will be collaboratively developed among the external evaluator and the members of the Utah State Office of Education cross-department team designing and administering the School Improvement Fund strategies. The evaluation design will include the annual U.S. Department of Education reporting requirements. An project logic model will guide all evaluation endeavors.

An external evaluator or evaluation team and the Utah State Office of Education will collaboratively complete the evaluation matrix (See Table C. and establish policies and procedures to accomplish objectives and ensure adherence to evaluation protocols regarding human subject protection and assurances as well as data collection and program goals.

Table C. Utah Evaluation Matrix for School Improvement Fund Utilization

Evaluation Matrix - Program Goals:				
Evaluation Objectives	Indicators	Evidence Sources	Evaluation Decisions	Timeline